

Roberts' Series of Original Dramas.

THE  
Late Lamented;

OR,

WHERE'S MY SECOND?

A FARCE IN ONE ACT.

SUITABLE FOR PRIVATE ENTERTAINMENTS.

BOSTON:  
PUBLISHED BY CHARLES C. ROBERTS  
24 CONGRESS STREET.  
1867



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District of Massachusetts.

# THE LATE LAMENTED;

OR

## WHERE'S MY SECOND?

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### CHARACTERS.

Mrs. HILSON.—A widow of thirty-five, although mindful of her “dear, departed first,” is looking out for “*her second*.”

SUSAN SPARK.—A lady’s maid, loving, loquacious, and on the look-out.

EPH. SPAULDING,—From way up country, fond of the marvelous, and a little given to story-telling.

POMPEY FERGUS.—A night-blooming snow-ball from Virginia.

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PERIOD.—1867.

TIME OF REPRESENTATION. About forty minutes.

SCENE,—*A Breakfast Room.*

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### DRESSES:

*Mrs. Hilson*,—Half-mourning to taste.

*Susan Spark*,—Neat calico dress.

*Eph. Spaulding*,—Unique country style.

*Pompey Fergus*,—Plain and coarse.

### PROPERTIES:

*Mrs. H.*,—A letter.

*Susan*,—A newspaper, a pamphlet book.

*Ephraim*,—A stick and handkerchief bundle, a hat, a pine stick to whittle and a jack-knife.

SCENE.—*A Breakfast Room.*

(*Enter Mrs. Hilson.*)

MRS. H. Oh, dear, what a terrible thing it is to be left a widow at thirty-five, with a small farm on your hands and no one capable of managing it. My poor dead and gone *first*, the late lamented Mr. H., understood all these matters, and when he was here things went on very well ; but now everything is at sixes and sevens. Here are cows, pigs, hens and chickens to be looked after, and no one but Susy and the negro to look after affairs. And how are they looked after ? The cows have broke into the pigery, and the pigs have changed places with the cows. The sauce garden is neglected, and things in general are out of joint. I want a farmer to take charge of my place, and three days ago I sent an advertisement to Boston to be inserted in two of the leading papers.

SUSAN. (*Pokes her head in at the door.*) Please, ma'am, shall I come in ?

MRS. H. Yes, come in. (*Susy enters newspaper in hand.*) What is it now, Susan ?

SUSAN. Pomp has been to the Postoffice and brought back this paper. (*Hands paper.*)

MRS. H. Ah, yes ; it contains my advertisement, I suppose. Let me see. (*Turns over paper.*) Yes, here it is. (*Reads.*) "Wanted, to go a few miles into the country, a smart, intelligent man, who understands farming. Good references required. Apply in person. For directions as to locality inquire at this office." That is all correct. (*Susan takes a small book from her pocket and is intently reading to herself, and does not notice Mrs. H. when she returns the paper.*) Preserve the paper, Susan, for I may be obliged to advertise again ; and if so, I shall want this paper to copy it. (*Observes Susan.*) Bless me, Susan, what are you doing ?

SUSAN. (*With attempt at tears.*) Ah, ma'am, I was reading this 'ere story ; it's awful touching ; it's the touchingest story I ever read.

MRS. H. What is it all about, pray?

SUSAN. It's called the "Marble Heart," and tells all about Miss Marble and her heart.

MRS. H. Stuff and nonsense, Susan; I wish you would throw away such trash and pay more attention to my affairs. I'll warrant me your morning's work is unfinished.

SUSAN. No, ma'am, everything is all done.

MRS. H. I hope I shall find it to be so. Where is Pompey? I have an errand to be done.

SUSAN. He's in the garden, ma'am; shall I go call him?

MRS. H. No; I'll speak to him as I go along. I hope, Susan, you will put away those nonsensical books and pay more attention to your duties. (*Exit.*)

SUSAN. Yes, ma'am. Well, I declare; I wonder if Mrs. H. has a heart? Perhaps her "dead and gone first," as she calls him, took it away with him. If she would only read this book it would make her heart soft if she has any. (*Tries to weep.*) It has made mine as soft as dough. (*Reads from the book.*) "The lady was reclining upon the sofa, peacefully slumbering; the villain stole softly to her side, and raising the glittering blade was about to pierce that unoffending heart, when a young huzzar, a visitor at the house, rushed in, seized the murderer's hand, and cried *hold villain!*" Ain't that splendid? Oh, how I should love that little huzzar.

(*Pompey enters from behind, approaching Susan who does not perceive him.*)

How noble that young huzzar must have looked. I think I see him now. (*Refers to the book and reads, acting while she speaks.*) "The lady was reclining upon the sofa, peacefully slumbering; the villain stole softly to her side, and raising the glittering blade, was about to pierce that unoffending heart, when a young huzzar, a visitor at the house, rushed in, seized the murderer's hand, and cried *hold villain!*" (*At this point she unconsciously rushes upon and seizes Pomp., who has now advanced to where she stands.*)

POMP. De Lord o' mercy, Miss Susy, what you gwine to do ?

SUSAN. Bless me, is that you, Pomp. ?

POMP. Well, dat's my impression ; if dis child knows his self, it isn't any body else.

SUSAN. What do you want, Pomp. ?

POMP. Nuffin, Miss ; I'se been to the shop for Missus, and jis got back, dat's all.

SUSAN. Have you got your work all done, Pomp. ?

POMP. In course I has ; I've giv de carrots to de cows ; I'se fed the pigs, and counted all the little pigs.

SUSAN. Are they all there ?

POMP. Yes ; but by golly, dat little brown pig wid de two crooks in his tail, is a funny little scamp.

SUSAN. How so, Pomp. ?

POMP. Well, I dun know ; I 'spect he's nervous ; he won't stand still ; I allers have to ketch dat little scamp by de tail and hold him till I count him.

SUSAN. Any of the chickens gone, Pomp. ?

POMP. No, Miss ; de whole family is dere, and dey are all whistling as merry as larks. You know dat little black chicken, Miss, wid his tail all gone ?

SUSAN. Oh, yes ; I know *him* ; he's a terrible greedy little wretch.

POMP. Jest so, Miss, for all de world. By golly, I thought I should die laffing todder day, when I giv 'um de meal dough. Dat little bugger was so mighty 'fraid he shouldn't get his share, dat he dipped so deep dat he got his 'froat all full of de dough, and he coughed and sneezed and tried to swallow all de time and could n't. I declar', I began to tink he was a gone chicken.

SUSAN. Well, Pomp., that is just like a good many men and women ; they are not satisfied with what they have got, but want to get more.



POMP. Yes, but you see, Miss, dis chicken didn't get no more.

SUSAN. Oh, he didn't!

POMP. No, Miss; for you see, while he was coughing and sneezing, and trying to clear his froat, de oder chickens stepped in and eat up all the dough.

SUSAN. Served him right, too. (*Prepares to exit.*) I must go and see to my work, Pomp., and you must look after yours. Where is the mistress? in the parlor?

POMP. Yes, Miss, in the parlor. (*Exit Susan. Pomp. alone.*) By golly, dat chicken is the funniest little scamp I ever did see anyhow. He'll get choked to deff one ob dese days. (*Laughing.*) And den dat are little pig; he's anoder funny little bugger. He's got two crooks in him tail. De second crook ain't no use at all, it's only in the way of de oder one. (*Pauses.*) I likes living wid dis Missus Hilson; she's berry good woman. She gibs me plenty to eat, plenty to drink, and a plenty to sleep. Den dere's Miss Susy, she's a nice gal; she allers treats me well, and dere's nuffin in de world I wouldn't do for dat gal. (*A knock is heard without.*) Bless de goodness, what's dat? (*Goes to one side, speaks off.*) Who dere? what you want?

EPH. (*Speaks outside.*) Why yeou confounded fool, don't you see who it is?

POMP. Yes; I sees an individual, but what you want?

EPH. Want? I want you to let me in; what do you s'pose I want?

POMP. (*Goes off and returns instantly, speaking.*) Come in, come in, individual.

EPH. (*Enters, with stick over shoulder to which is swung a handkerchief bundle.*) How long do you kalkerlate ginerally to keep folks waiting?

POMP. Why didn't you ring de bell, and not thump on de door?

EPH. Ring the bell! I didn't see no bell.

POMP. Didn't you see de knob ; de knob on de side ob de door ?

EPH. What, that little round thing ? well, you have thundering queer names for things down in these parts. Do you live in this 'ere house ?

POMP. Yes ; I is de confidential servant of de family.

EPH. Show ! you don't say so.

POMP. Yes, sar ; jest so, true as you live.

EPH. What part o' human creation did you come from, any way ?

POMP. I cum from de Souf. Massa Lincoln 'mancipated me four or five years ago, and I's been 'mancipated eber since.

EPH. What, was you one of the fellers that used to be slaves, and was set free by the President ?

POMP. Yes, sar ; I was one ob dem same individuals.

EPH. (*Takes off his hat.*) Well, I'll tell you what, that 'ere President Lincoln was a human man, and I respect his memory. I do, by gravy. (*Replaces hat.*) Well, that 'ere man did a good thing for the niggers, anyhow.

POMP. Look here, Mr.—what's your name ? Ain't no niggers now ; we's colored men,

EPH. Just so ; *say*, colored man, have you got a good place here ?

POMP. Jest de best place in de world ; I likes de Missus, and wouldn't swop my sitivation wid any odder colored man in de whole State. Now, whar did you cum from, and what are you gwine to do here ?

EPH. Well, colored man, you seem to be a pooty good sort of a chap and I don't mind telling you. My name's Eph. Spaulding ; Eph., you know, is the short for Ephraim ; but they never called me anything but Eph., at hum. I am a poor orphan ; I ain't got no father nor mother ; both on 'um died when I was a young shaver,

and I've been living out, and working to farming, and finally I kind o' thought I'd come down to Bosting and see if sunthing wouldn't turn up, to give me a living. Well, I happened to read in the newspaper that somebody out of town wanted a farmer, so I hunted up the place and here I am, as large as life, and twice as natural.

POMP. How did you find out my Missus wanted a farmer?

EPH. Why, darn it, I told you I read it in the newspaper.

POMP. Can you read?

EPH. Read? to be sure I can; can't you?

POMP. No! I wish I could; Miss Susy is trying to learn me, and says, one ob dese days I can read as well as she does.

EPH. Miss Susy? who's she?

POMP. She libs in de family, too; she's an upper servant, and one ob de best gals dat eber libed.

EPH. You don't say so! is she pooty?

POMP. Jest as pretty as a pink, and sweet as sugar in de sugar cane.

EPH. That's the sort o' gal for me. Well, colored man, where's your Mistress? I kind o' guess we can hitch on a bargain, and if we do, I rayther conclude that I can make this 'ere farm slide rite along jest as though it was greased.

POMP. Well, Mr.,—I forgot de name,—

EPH. Eph., Eph.; call me Eph., that sounds more tu hum like.

POMP. I'll call de missus, and tell her Mr. Eph. wants to see her. *(Exit Pomp.)*

EPH. *(Taking a general survey of things.)* Things look about right, hereabouts, and I shouldn't wonder if this

turned out tu be a pooty good sort o' place. A home like this is better by a thundering sight than being struck with lightning. Well, I reckon,—ha,—somebody's coming. (*Enter Widow Hilson.*)

EPH. Heow deu yeou deu, ma'am ; I reckon you are the mistress of this house.

MRS. H. Yes ; the colored man told me that some one wished to see me.

EPH. That's so ma'am ; 'twas only me. The fact is, in short, I see'd your advertisement in the Bosting papers, and being a bit of a farmer, I've cum to get the place, that is, perviding we suit all 'round.

MRS. H. Yes ; I am very much in need of a farmer to take charge of my small farm. I have no man but Pomp., who is a good clever creature, but he does not understand farming.

EPH. I can learn him the business in the whisk of a cat's tail. I'll show him all about it.

MRS. H. Where are you from ?

EPH. All the way from New Hampshire, where the hills are as plenty as flies in August.

MRS. H. You are used to farming, then ?

EPH. Bless you, ma'am, I was born in a horse trough, cradled in a hay loft, rode horse to plough when I was only seven, and mowed half an acre a day when I was ten year old.

MRS. H. You began quite early. What is your name ?

EPH. Ephraim Spaulding ; Eph. for short.

MRS. H. Well, I think you may answer my purpose very well. What wages do you expect ?

EPH. Oh, I 'aint at all particular ; give me what I'm worth and I shall be satisfied.

MRS. H. Very well; you can commence, and see how you like. Take your bundle, and go into the kitchen and Susan, my maid, will give you any information you need.

EPH. I'll deu it quicker than a cat can lick her ear. (*Prepares to exit*) Is this the way, ma'am?

MRS. H. Yes! through the entry yonder. (*Points off*.)

EPH. Here I go. (*Exit whistling*.)

MRS. H. I have no doubt but this plain, blunt man will succeed very well. Oh dear, how unfortunate that the "late lamented Mr. H." is not here to look after affairs. I can't recall "my first," and where *can* I find a *second*? There *are* cases in which a woman is justified in marrying a second time, and I think my case is one of them. (*Produces a letter and sighs*.) This place is so retired that the opportunities for "finding a *second*," are very limited. (*Looks at letter*.) Here is a love missive from a bachelor, one Mr. Leonidas Hamilton, who professes great regard for me. This is the *third* that I have received from him, not one of which have I yet answered. They are very tender. (*Reads*.) "Adorable Widow." Only hear that; *adorable*. "Adorable Widow, your lonely situation has often caused me much anxiety, and twice have I written to you, offering my heart and hand; but you have never condescended to reply to me. I pray you keep me no longer in suspense, but write and relieve the anxiety of your sincere friend and admirer, Leonidas." (*Folds letter and puts it away*.) There; so much for my "friend and admirer Leonidas." I wish I could read the stars and learn my fate. (*Prepares to exit*.) I greatly fear that he is not decreed to be "my second." But who *is* to be? I must have a "*second*" somewhere; but the question is, where is he? (*Exit*.)

(*Enter Pomp*.)

POMP. (*Laughing*.) By golly, dat Mr. Eph. is jest de funniest chap dat eber I see'd in all my born days. I almost broke rite in two wid laffing to hear him tell about

dat old cow up among de hills whar he's been libing. (*Laughing*) And den about dat contrary horse dat wouldn't do nuffing but *back* when he was hitched into de cart. So Mr. Eph. took and turned him 'round and put his head whar his tail ought to be, and den he begin to *back*, and go fuss rate, and dats de way he went clean to de grist-mill wid de bags of corn. (*Laughing*)

(*Mrs. H. without, calling "Pomp."*)

By golly, dat's missus. I'se comin', missus. (*Laughing.*) Oh, dat Mr. Eph. will kill me wid laffing, I know he will, sure. (*Exit laughing.*)

(*Enter Eph.*)

EPH. I'll swun to hokey, if that nig isn't about as cute as a Yankee. He learns to do up the chores about rite. He can fodder the cows, feed the pigs, and drive the hens to water jest about as well as I can deu it myself. That 'ere Susy's a cute one teu. She calls Pomp. a night-blooming snow-ball, and I r'ally believe that 'ere feller would pick his eyes out for that gal. I don't blame him neither. I'm jest going to shin up to that 'ere angel in a hoop skirt, ef I don't, molasses me all over and turn me out in fly time. I think she kind o' likes *me* teu, and if we should happen to make a hitch on't, I should feel as rich as ef I owned a share in a bank. Well, there no use talking, I've made up my mind,—(*Susy without, singing.*) Je-hosh-aphat, there's the critter coming. I feel as if I'd swallowed a dose of fish-hooks and molasses, and the *pints* was all sticking rite through my skin. (*Enter Susy.*) Susy, how deu you do? You go singing 'round the house like a martin-gale.

SUSAN. I always sing, Ephraim, when I'm happy.

EPH. Then you're happy jest about the hul time.

SUSAN. Don't you never sing, Ephraim?

EPH. I used to when I was a little shaver, but a fit o' sickness spilt my voice.

SUSAN. You don't say so; what was it?

EPH. A fever, Susy.

SUSAN. How did that spoil your voice?

EPH. Well, you see, Susy, I had a big fever, and I was a little chap, and the fever never turned, because there wa'n't room.

SUSAN. Oh, Ephraim, you are always joking.

EPH. But, Susy, when I say I ain't happy, by hokey that's no joke.

SUSAN. What makes you unhappy, Ephraim?

EPH. Something here, (*putting his hand upon the abdomen,*) no, I mean here. (*Placing hand upon heart.*)

SUSAN. What is it, Ephraim?

EPH. Well, as near as I can kalkerlate, it feels like a junk of cold pudding. I've swallow'd, and swallow'd, but it ain't no use, there it sticks like a burr on a pair o' trowsers.

SUSAN. What has caused you this trouble?

EPH. You, Susy.

SUSAN. (*Starting with surprise.*) Goodness gracious; not me, Ephraim?

EPH. Jest so, Susy; you're the gal.

SUSAN. I can't see how I'm the cause.

EPH. Well, Susy, it's here, and I might as well let it eout; I shall bust if I don't. The fact is, Susy, I *love* you.

SUSAN. (*Much excited.*) Oh, dear! Ephraim, how you did frighten me.

EPH. Faith, the cat's out of the bag, and I feel better. Now what do you say, Susy? is it a bargain?

SUSAN. (*Surprised.*) Dear me, Ephraim, you've taken me so by surprise that I don't know what to say.



EPH. Well, then, don't say anything; only love me a little, and I'll be as true to you as steel.

SUSAN. Give me a little time to think of it, Ephraim, for it's come so sudden my ideas are all a wool gathering.

EPH. Jest so; I don't believe in going it blind about anything; I like to look things rite in the face, myself. When my father died, Susy, he owned a farm; that 'ere farm he give to my uncle, and when that uncle dies the farm will come to me. So you see there'll be a home for us some time.

SUSAN. (*Preparing to Exit.*) Well, Ephraim, I must go to the dairy now, but I'll think of what you said.

EPH. That's right; and don't forget, Susy, to love me a little. (*Exit Susan*). By the great horn spoon, that gal's worth the best cow ever put up for sale. She's a ginuine true blue yankee, and the exact article for a farmer's wife.

(*Pomp. puts his head in, speaking.*)

POMP. Is you thar, Mr. Ephraim?

EPH. Yes, Pomp., what's busted neow?

POMP. Oh, nuffin, nuffin, Mr. Ephraim; I was only gwine to ax' you what to do wid dat dārn'd brindled cow.

EPH. Why, what's up about her?

POMP. I tell you, Mr. Ephraim, she's ugly as de werry debbil. Jess as soon as I put her in de paster she begin to butt de fence till she butt out two of de rails.

EPH. Oh, I'll fix her fun for her, consarn her picter.

POMP. How you gwine to do it, Mr. Ephraim?

EPH. Put specs on to her.

POMP. Specs? what is dem?

EPH. Why, put a board across her face and fasten it to her horns; didn't you never see a cow with specs on?



POMP. My golly, she must look funny though.

EPH. She'll feel worse than she looks, I reckon. Well, Pomp. speaking about cows, that Susy's a nice gal.

POMP. Mitey nice, mitey nice, Mr. Ephraim; I tink dat's de best gal I ever see'd. By de way, Mr. Ephraim, ain't you a little sweet on dat gal?

EPH. Oh, git eout, Pomp. (*Laughing.*)

POMP. Well, Mr. Ephraim, I thought so, 'pon my soul I did. Ah, well, I likes dat gal, I does, 'cans' she's so good to me.

EPH. In course she is; she's good to every body; don't the hens and chickens all run after her whenever they see her? dont all the neighbor's children love her? don't all cre-ation love her? I don't blame 'um neither. But say, Pomp, have you got that straw in?

POMP. All housed away, Mr. Ephraim, jest as snug as a bug.

EPH. Good for you, Pomp. Now we will go down to the barn and thrash a spell on them 'ere oats, and then our day's work is up. (*Both start to exit.*) But I tell you, Pomp., that 'ere Susy is a leetle the slickest gal in these 'ere diggin's.

POMP. Splendid, Mr. Ephraim, splendid. (*Exit both.*)

(*Enter Mrs. Hilson opposite.*)

MRS. H. Poor dear Leonidas; how dejected he is to be sure. As I was on my way to the village store this morning who should I meet but him, plump, face to face. Oh, how my heart did beat. At first I thought I would avoid him, but it was useless to attempt it; he had me fairly caged, and I was obliged to submit to fate with the best grace I could. Glad was I when the terrible ordeal was passed. I know not why it is, but I have an unconquerable aversion to that man. It doesn't seem at all likely that a widow of thirty-five, and an old bachelor of sixty will ever be likely to get along happily together.

Poor fellow, I pity him; I think he loves me, but I am certain that he is not the one to become my *second*. I promised him I would write to him, giving him my final decision. How terrible he will feel; but "what can't be cured must be endured." (*Prepares to exit.*) I am willing to make *some* sacrifice to secure a *second*, but in your case, Mr. Leonidas, I feel that the sacrifice would be too much for the gain. I must still keep up my pursuit, for my *second* I am certain is somewhere. (*Exit.*)

(*Enter Susan followed by Eph. whistling a stick.*)

EPH. Well neow, Susy, I rather konclude that things is gone to about the end of the string, and the sooner we get at the conclusion, the quicker. (*Whittles.*) You see, Susy, I ain't one o' them 'ere chaps that tries to get a gal's heart and then kicks it 'round as you would a foot-ball. If I was such a feller as that I'd hire a front seat on a coal cart and ride out of this 'ere village quicker than a streak of greased lightning. (*Whittles quick.*)

SUSAN. I hav'n't got no such opinion of you as that, Eph; but do you really think that you love me well enough to marry me and live with me all your life?

EPH. All my life? (*Whittles.*) What did I say to you last night, Susy, when you was in the kitchen mixing up them 'ere slap jacks?

SUSAN. Well, yes; I know you said that you would stick to me through thick and thin,—

EPH. That's so,—jest as true as the Book. And didn't I say, that whether our path was clear as that milk, or thick and muddy as that batter, you'd find Eph. Spaulding the same man? (*Whittles rapidly.*)

SUSAN. You did, Eph; those were your identical words.

EPH. I know'd you'd remember 'um, and when I said so I *meant* it. That's Eph. Spaulding out and out. By hokey, Susy, a man that would deceive a good, honest woman ought to be chaw'd up like cut feed.

SUSAN. I know you wouldn't deceive me, Eph., but getting married you know is kind of scarey business.

EPH. That's jest so; the idee on it is a good deal like going into water of a cold day; it ain't no use to stand thinking on it; one plunge and it's all over. Don't you recollect, Susy, when you and I was squatting on the grass plot 'tother day, feeding the chickens, and you told me all about yourself? (*Whittles slowly.*)

SUSAN. Oh, yes; I remember; and how you did cry.

EPH. Didn't I? blubbered jest like a darn'd great year old calf. Well, by gravy, I couldn't help it. You cum up pooty much as I did, without anybody to care a brass farthing whether you was fed or starved. (*Whittles slowly.*)

SUSAN. Yes, Eph; I was anything but happy when I was a child.

EPH. 'Twas jest so with me. I was kicked about from pillar to post, and was jest about as happy as a toad under a harrow. (*Whittles faster.*)

SUSAN. I recollect what the parson said one Sunday.

EPH. What was it, Susy?

SUSAN. He said, "that two persons of like experience were naturally drawn towards each other,"

EPH. That's as true as the Book, Susy; that 'ere parson's as sensible as a Lord Mayor; he's a human man, he is, and knows all about human nater. Ain't we been draw'd together like that, ever since you told me your story? Whenever we met we always run ag'in each other; if I went to the pantry didn't I always find you there?—everywhere I went I was sure to meet you. I tell you, Susy, that 'ere parson told the truth.

SUSAN. Do you really think so, Eph.?

EPH. Think so? I know it; (*whittles fast.*) There's something rite under my waistcoat that the parsons call a

conscience, and *that* says it is as true as the Book. Come, Susy, what do you say? spit it rite eout; shall we be hitched for life?

SUSAN. (*Hesitating.*) Oh, dear, Eph., I don't know what to say.

EPH. Say jest what your heart tells you to, and you won't get many miles eout of the rite road.

SUSAN. (*Turns her hevd from Eph. and puts out her hand.*) Well, *there*, Eph., there's my hand.

EPH. (*Takes her hand.*) And your heart teu? 'cause you know this ain't of much account without the t'other.

SUSAN. Yes, Eph., heart and hand too.

EPH. (*Kisses her hand.*) Je-ru-slm.

SUSAN. (*Pulls away her hand and exits running off.*) Why, Eph., ain't you ashamed? right afore folks. (*Exits*)

EPH. Ashamed? No, I rayther think not; it's the kiss of an honest man, on the hand of an honest woman, and any man that's ashamed of that is meaner than piz'n. (*Whittles.*)

*Enter Mrs. Hilson.*

MRS. H. Ephraim, I've been inquiring for you.

EPH. Well, ma'am, I've been rite here for about ten minutes.

MRS. H. I wish to ask you if you don't think I had better sell that unruly cow? Farmer Rogers has made me a good offer for her, and I am afraid we shall never be able to break her of her bad tricks.

EPH. Wa'al, I don't know. (*Whittles.*) Why not fat her up, and salt her down?

MRS. H. Dear me, Ephraim, I hav'n't the heart to kill and eat anything that was born and raised upon the place.

EPH. Why, bless me, Mrs. Hilson, what a tender heart you have got. Then I guess you'd better sell her, for

she's a pesky mischievous critter anyhow. (*Whittles fast.*) Speaking of hearts, Mrs. Hilson, I've got a small bit of news to tell you.

MRS. H. Ah ! what is it ?

EPH. That 'ere Susy and me are going to get hitched.

MRS. H. Do you mean to say that you are really going to be married ?

EPH. Jest so, exactly ; it's coming off sure, jest as straight as a string.

MRS. H. (*Looking disappointed.*) That then is decided upon, is it ?

EPH. Jest as sure as your'e a widder. But you look disapp'inted ; you don't seem to rejoice in our good fortune. (*Whittles slowly.*)

MRS. H. I do indeed rejoice at your good fortune Susan is a good honest girl, and will be a good wife to any man who is deserving of her.

EPH. (*Whittles fast.*) That's as true as the sun shines. I'll take my affidavit on a whole stack of primers.

MRS. H. But still, Ephraim, while this event brings pleasure to you, it brings pain to me.

EPH. No ! you don't say so. (*Whittles slowly.*)

MRS. H. It does indeed, for then I fear I shall lose you both, and that would be a great disappointment to me.

EPH. It does look kind'r so, that's a fact ; but then you know, Mrs. Hilson, the best of friends must part *some* time.

MRS. H. That is very true, Ephraim ; but perhaps something may turn up, so that you may *not* leave the farm at all.

EPH. (*Whittles fast.*) Jest as like o' not there may be ; none of us are sharp enough to look into the futur, to see what's in store for us.

MRS. H. That is very true likewise. Well, Ephraim, I will tell farmer Rogers he can have the cow. (*Aside, as she exits.*) Ephraim is a happy man; he has found his *first*, but my *second* I greatly fear is lost in the crowd, (*Exit.*)

EPH. (*Who during the last speech has been whistling slowly, has not noticed Mrs. H's. exit, and turns suddenly around as if to address her.*) Well, I would; and I would tell him, too,—what gone? she has by gravy. Well, I've slopp'd over, and she knows it all. I thought she'd kind o' flare up about it, but she takes it about as kindly as a mouse takes to cheese. (*Whittles fast.*) I guess I'll go and find Susy and tell her about how the thing is, and let her know that I've broke the ice, and told the hull story with all the particulars. (*As he attempts to exit he encounters Pomp., who enters.*)

POMP. By golly, Mr. Ephraim, I've been all over de place looking arter you.

EPH. Wa'al, what's broke now?

POMP. Why, you see, Mr. Ephraim, dad 'ere debbil ob a cow has been butting down de rail fence ag'in.

EPH. Well, never mind; Farmer Rogers over by the mill, yonder, will settle that 'ere cows coffee so she won't trouble Mrs. Hilson any more.

POMP. How's dat, Mr. Ephraim?

EPH. Why he is going to buy her.

POMP. My golly, if he don't find his hands chuck full, den dis child will neber guess ag'in, dat's all.—I say, Mr. Ephraim, you won't be mad wid dis colored man if he ax' you a question, will you?

EPH. No, Pomp., spit it rite eout.

POMP. What, in de world make Miss Susy so happy? She's singing all de whole blessed time.

EPH. Wa'al, I rayther conclude you haint heard the news.

POMP. Dat's a fact; is dere any news? golly what am it, Mister Ephraim?

EPH. Pomp, you won't cry about it, so I don't mind telling you. (*Whispers in Pomp's ear.*)—

POMP. De goodness me; you don't tell me dar 'are? (*Laughs heartily.*)

EPH. There's more of it teu. (*Whispers again.*)

POMP. (*Laughing immoderately.*) By golly, Mister Ephraim, you are a happy man. Look here, I want to ax' you a question. (*Whispers in Eph's. ear.*)

EPH. If I don't then eat me up into shoe strings.— (*Whispers in Pomp's. ear.*)

POMP. (*Immoderately laughing.* Don't say no more, Mr. Ephraim; don't told me any more; if you does I shall break in t'ree halves, laughing. (*Listens as if he heerd some one approaching.*) By golly, dat's Miss Susan coming. (*Enter Susan.*) Miss Susan, I's tickled to hear the good news; I is now, sure.

SUSAN. What do you mean, Pomp?

EPH. Oh, I told him all about it. The news was too good by a darn'd sight to keep, so I let rite eout.

SUSAN. Ah, but Ephraim, the worst is yet to come. What will Mrs. Hilson say?

EPH. Say? why what on airth *can* she say?

SUSAN. Of course she has no *right* to say anything, but you know she has been very kind to us.

EPH. I know that, and I wouldn't stand by and hear anything said ag'in her, no how. But I tell you, Susy, she rejoices at our good fortune as much as we do.

SUSAN. Does she know it, then?

EPH. She do.

SUSAN. And you told her?

EPH. I didn't do nothing else.

POMP. My golly, he told me too, and I was a good deal tickleder dan he was.

EPH. Wa'al, Susy, the hull thing is all settled, and there ain't but one thing more to fix.

SUSAN. The wedding day ?

EPH. Your'e a witch ; you've hit the nail right plump on the head.

POMP. (*Aside.*) Dat's so, by golly ; she hit it dat time.

EPH. Wa'al, Susy, spit it rite out ; let's have the thing squared up.

SUSAN. I think I'll leave that to you, Ephraim.

EPH. Jest as you like. Then if it's all the same to you, we'll just take a walk over to the parson's and get hitched to-morrow. (*Enter Mrs. Hilson.*)

MRS. H. I object to that, decidedly.

EPH. Why, Mrs. Hilson, you ain't a going to knock over our bowl of apple sass, are you ?

MRS. H. By no means ; but I have a better plan than that if you and Susan will consent.

EPH. Wa'al, I rayther conclude that any proposal of your'n will be about rite, and we'll agree to it anyhow ; hey, Susy ?

SUSAN. Oh, certainly, if you wish it.

MRS. H. I think it will meet the wishes of both of you.

POMP. (*Aside.*) Now she's going to do something big.

MRS. H. I propose to have the parson come to the farm and marry you in the parlor. What do you say ?

SUSAN. That will be nice ; hey, Ephraim ?

EPH. That suits me to a shaving.

POMP. Golly, I must get down de old fiddle.



EPH. So you shall, Pomp., and after the parson's gone we'll have a shake down.

MRS. H. I have yet another proposition, Ephraim, which I think you will like better; at least I hope you will, for it will be most agreeable to me

POMP. (*Aside.*) Dere's some more good news coming.

EPH. Well, we'll agree to just about anything, won't we, Susy?

SUSAN. Mrs. Hilson is very good, indeed.

MRS. H. You know there are three rooms in the farm house, for which I have got no use. Now I thought how comfortably and snug you would keep house by yourselves, and at the same time I could retain both of you, to carry on the farm.

POMP. (*Aside.*) My golly, dat woman's chock full of kindness; she's an angel shure as I live.

EPH. How do you like that, Susy?

SUSAN. That will be delightful. Really, Mrs. Hilson, you are too kind.

POMP. (*Aside.*) No she ain't, not a bit.

(*All come down front, standing in the following order:*

<i>Mrs. H.</i>	<i>Susan.</i>	<i>Eph.</i>	<i>Pomp.</i>
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MRS. H. Then it is all settled, and each one is suited, are you?

POMP. Well, but look here; what's to be come of dis child? t'wont do to leave him out in the cold, he'll freeze sure.

MRS. H. Oh, you are already provided for, Pomp. you are to remain, and help on the farm as you have done

POMP. Tank you, missus, a thousand times. (*Aside.*) By golly, I was afeer d dis child was gwine to be frow'd away.

EPH. (*Coming down the front.*) Wa'al, this 'ere has proved a pretty good job for me, for I have found a true woman for a wife, and that's a kind o' fruit that ain't found on every tree. I've about come to the conclusion that if a fellow does about the rite thing he'll get ahead as fast as is healthy for him. (*Begins to whittle slowly.*) It's a kind of hard world sometimes, and there's a good deal of whittling to be done to get ahead much; but when a chap gets a good wife, he's got somebody to help him whittle, and between 'um both they get shavings enough to kindle the fire and keep the pot a b'ilin'.

(*Pomp. comes down quickly, and Eph. returns to former position.*)

POMP. Now, dat Mr. Ephraim talks just like a book, and what he says is the troof and noffin' else. Dis child knows by blessed 'sperience dat you can't make de pot bile widout any wood, for de more you try to make it bile widout any fire, de more it won't do it. Dis has been a good job for me, too, as well as for Ephraim, for I'se got a good home some more, wid plenty of wittles to eat, and plenty to sleep. (*Retires to former position.*)

EPH. Come, Susy, spin off a little something, and don't let the folks think you are sick of your bargain.

(*Susan comes down front.*)

SUSAN. Indeed I am not; I should be ungrateful, truly, not to confess myself happy in an honest man's love, and with the prospect of a happy home. (*Retires to former position.*)

(*Mrs. Hilson comes down front.*)

MRS. H. If I have succeeded in contributing to the happiness of three individuals I ought to be thankful. I would like to make another happy, but I don't exactly know where he is. If my second should chance to be here, he will be welcome at the farm house.

(*Curtain falls quick.*)

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